

ADVOCATING FOR CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

- WHEREAS:** Global competitiveness has awakened the need for business and education to work hand-in-hand to address the skills gap among American workers. Career Technical Education (CTE) is helping our nation meet this very real and immediate challenge as well as supporting economic development and student achievement. "Experts project 47 million job openings in the decade ending 2018. About one-third will require an associate's degree or certificate, and nearly all will require real-world skills that can be mastered through CTE."¹; and
- WHEREAS:** AFT Michigan believes that high-quality career and technical education (CTE) programs are an important opportunity to provide students and adults with the technical and academic skills that will equip them for direct entry into the workforce and prepare them for higher and continuing education. CTE programs of study impart critical academic, technical and employability skills and offer students a pathway from secondary to post secondary to a career requiring high skills and providing high wages. These programs also help students master the STEM skills and competencies that have value in just about any career; and
- WHEREAS:** This cannot be accomplished by secondary and postsecondary educational institutions alone. Successful CTE programs require the input and support of business, community agencies, and labor unions from all sectors. Building these linkages between CTE, business leaders and employers can impact the availability of work-based learning opportunities for a broader array of students and supply business with highly qualified, well-educated applicants for all occupations; and
- WHEREAS:** Within Michigan there are two primary sources of fiscal support for CTE programs. The Perkins Act is the primary federal legislation that provides funding for secondary and postsecondary CTE programs. The other is State Aid Vocational Added Cost funding for secondary CTE programs; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan advocates that state aid funding be increased to the 2003-2004 level of \$30,000,000 plus an additional increase based on the higher technological/ higher cost equipment of current CTE programs; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan will work with AFT for the reauthorization of the Perkins Act to include:
Increased funding for targeted programs: A reauthorized Perkins Act should maintain a targeted funding formula. Current funding priorities have become diffuse and need to be refocused. Given the double whammy of state and local budget cuts, this is particularly critical. Too many CTE schools and programs lack the resources and supports for the equipment, hands-on experiences, curriculum development, internships, externships and professional development needed to keep pace with an ever-changing technological world due to a lack of federal, state and local funding. Current post-sequestration funding for CTE programs is \$1.071 billion. This number needs to be increased.

¹ Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce via Harvard's Pathway to Prosperity report, p. 29
<http://cew.georgetown.edu/>

In addition, in a time of limited resources, a reauthorized Perkins Act must ensure that funds are not swallowed up by state and district bureaucracies, but instead are directed to those secondary and postsecondary institutions that provide high-quality CTE programs.

Finally, modeling Perkins on Race to the Top or other competitive grant programs will not advance high-quality CTE programs for all students. Providing a competition at a time when states are in financial distress—and when programs serving the neediest students and adults are being cut—simply makes no sense. If the Perkins program is altered from a targeted formula to a competitive grant program, it will mean that no matter how much money is provided, it will benefit only some of the many who need CTE programs.

Development of high-quality programs: A reauthorized Perkins Act should focus on the development of high-quality programs of study—that is the structured sequence of academic and career and technical education courses that lead to a postsecondary-level credential. It should also focus on curriculum development, and on strengthening connections between high schools and postsecondary systems; and

Increased accountability: The Perkins Act's current accountability system needs to be revamped, with an eye toward providing fewer, more meaningful measures than those currently used. At the secondary level, the focus should be on measures such as high school graduation and career and technical certification. At the postsecondary level, the attainment of credentials and placement in appropriate jobs are especially important. It is critical that labor-market data be used in accountability systems, as this will ensure that CTE programs are preparing students for actual jobs; and

Program alignment: A reauthorized Perkins Act should ensure the coordination of various government programs that support different components of CTE. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that programs and funding provided by the Department of Education (Perkins funding and College Work-Study funding) and by the Department of Labor are coordinated and focused on providing high-quality career and technical education; and

Research: In order to maintain the recent momentum toward high-quality career and technical education that serves all students, the federal government should support rigorous research on existing CTE programs; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan brings together career and technical education advocate to urge the state to direct local school districts to fund the implementation of these programs, including funding career guidance and career development activities for students and shall advocate for high-quality "programs of study," curriculum development, and stronger connections between secondary and postsecondary systems; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will advocate that CTE programs:

- Ensure that the instructional shifts being made as part of the Common Core implementation include CTE programs and educators.
- Employ teaching strategies and curricula that integrate career and technical subjects, as well as core academic subjects, and STEM in students' programs of study.

- Have as their foundation partnerships among districts, higher education, businesses, community institutions and labor unions from all sectors of the economy.
- Coordinate career and technical programs and sequences between secondary and postsecondary educational institutions.
- Provide educators with high-quality professional development that is embedded in their workplace, focused on the real issues they confront in their work, and sustained over a period of time.
- Train guidance counselors to help identify students who are candidates for CTE programs, ensure these students get all their courses, and help them navigate CTE requirements (e.g., work-based learning, industry certification, technical endorsement affixed to the diploma).
- Create public-private partnerships bringing together multiple stakeholders—government and civil society, secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, business and labor—in one common effort to develop and disseminate the high-quality career and technical education that none of these constituencies can produce on its own.
- Incorporate appropriate technology - the same technology used in the work place.
- Provide paid internships and other project and work-based opportunities for students.
- Use high-quality performance assessments of technical skills - industry assessments that provide a state/nationally recognized certificate, if possible.
- Support Career Technical Student Organizations and other leadership development opportunities.

Submitted by:

Hamtramck Federation of Teachers Local #1052

Revised and Recommended by the Resolutions & Legislative Committee (May 6, 2014)